



## Low Birth Weight

### Clark County and Washington State

#### Three year periods, 1992-1994 through 1999-2001

#### Why we should care:

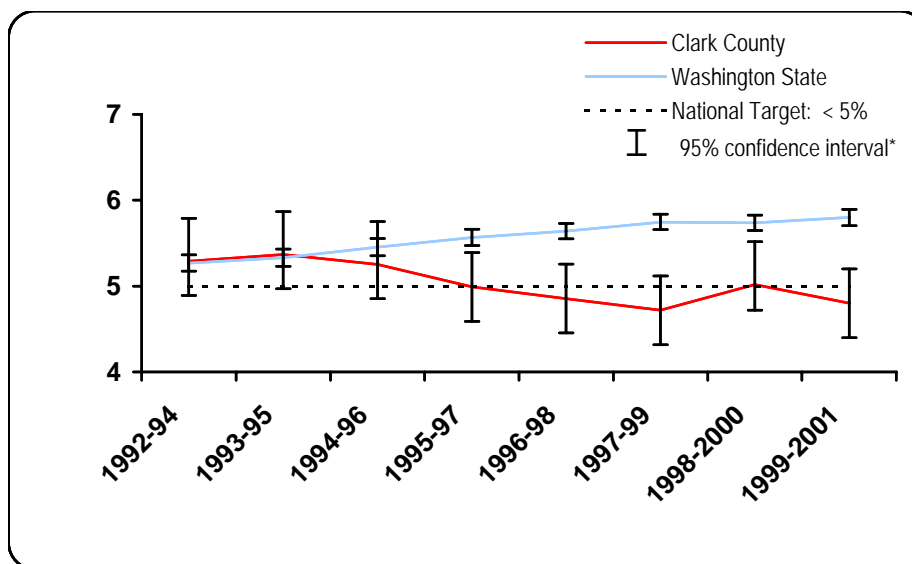
Low birth weight (LBW) is a major contributor to infant illness and death. (1) Children born LBW are at increased risk for health, development, behavioral, and social problems. In 1998, hospital care of a healthy infant averaged \$1,900, while hospital care of a LBW infant averaged \$6,200. (1) The immeasurable cost of LBW is the unrealized potential of each affected child.

#### Status:

- In the 1999-2001 period in Clark County, 4.8% of all births were to infants with LBW compared to 5.8% for Washington State. Since the 1995-1997 period, Clark County's percent of LBW births has been significantly lower than the state's percent. (2,3)
- Clark County has met the national target that no more than 5% of all births are LBW. (2,3,4)

#### What we can do:

- The most effective interventions to increase birth weight focus on attaining and maintaining optimal maternal health and well-being. To this end we can advocate for legislation and programs that strive toward improved maternal health, specifically:
  - **smoking cessation** via effective, affordable interventions. (5,6)
  - **maternal nutrition** via increased access to nutritious foods and nutrition education for all women (5,7)
  - **increased time periods between pregnancies** via easily accessible, culturally appropriate, timely, quality health and reproductive care for all women (5,,8)



Year	Clark County			Washington State		
	% LBW	95% CI*	Number	% LBW	95% CI*	Number
1992-1994	5.3	(4.9,5.7)	660	5.3	(5.2,5.4)	12,403
1993-1995	5.4	(5.0,5.8)	699	5.3	(5.2,5.4)	12,420
1994-1996	5.3	(4.9,5.7)	715	5.5	(5.4,5.6)	12,652
1995-1997	5.0	(4.6,5.4)	710	5.6	(5.5,5.7)	12,949
1996-1998	4.9	(4.5,5.1)	719	5.6	(5.5,5.7)	13,254
1997-1999	4.7	(4.4,5.2)	719	5.7	(5.7,5.8)	13,558
1998-2000	5.0	(4.7,5.4)	788	5.7	(5.6,5.8)	13,694
1999-2001	4.8	(4.5,5.2)	764	5.8	(5.7,5.9)	13,737

\*If the confidence intervals for state and county overlap in a given year, there is no significant difference between these rates.

See back side for technical notes and sources.



**Technical Notes:** Low Birth Weight (LBW) infants are newborns who weigh less than 2500 grams (5 lbs., 8 oz) and include those born too early and those whose intrauterine growth is retarded. Very Low Birth Weight (VLBW) infants weigh less than 1500 grams

Washington State has set more stringent health goals based on the higher health status of the general population of this region of the United States. Clark County's percent is above the Washington State Year 2000 Public Health Improvement Plan (PHIP) Goal

**Sources:** (1) Washington State Department of Health. *The Health of Washington State. Low Birth Weight.* Olympia, WA, 2002, Aug [cited 2002, Nov] 418p. (2) *Vital Registration System, Annual Statistics Files, Births 1980-2001.* [Data file]. Olympia, WA: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics. (3) Public Health: Seattle & King County, Epidemiology, Planning, & Evaluation. (1991-2003). *VistaPHW 2.3.2*, 2002 [Computer software for public health assessment]. Seattle, WA. (4) National Target, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2000, January). *Healthy People 2010* Target Objective 16-10a: No more than 5% of births are Low Birth Weight. Washington, DC. (5) Alexander, G.R., & Korenbrot, C.C. (1995, Spring). The Role of Prenatal Care in Preventing Low Birth Weight. *Low Birth Weight: The Future of Children*, 5, No. 1. (6) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1998, April 9-10). *Summary: Consensus Conference on Smoking Cessation in Pregnancy*. Retrieved January 17, 2003 from <http://www.smokefreefamilies.org/science.html>. (7) Institute of Medicine. (1985). *Preventing Low Birth Weight*. National Academy Press, Washington, DC. (8) Zhu, BP, Rolfs, RT, Nangle, BE, & Horan, JM. (1999, February 25). Effect of the Interval between Pregnancies on Perinatal Outcomes. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 340, 589-594.